



A GUIDE TO BUYING PANJABIS THIS FESTIVE SEASON

**PG 3**

TRAVERSING THE ETHICAL  
MINEFIELD OF KEEPING  
PETS

**PG 8**



# THE EVER EVOLVING TALE OF SAREES



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA



# EDITORIAL

I've had a strained relationship with the concept of femininity growing up. Growing up, I thought that my awkward posture, big nose, acne, fuzzy legs, and sweaty brows somehow exiled me from the Fantastic Feminine Females Federation. In hindsight, my intense need to not be like "other girls" in my early teens definitely didn't help with feminine camaraderie.

Thankfully, my relationship with femininity has improved drastically over the years, but it took a lot of effort. I think the biggest step was understanding that the concept of "femininity" is exactly that. Just a concept. But as kids, when we thought of "tough girls," it probably involved rejecting anything that falls under the umbrella of femininity.

I'm in my twenties now and I have grown to fully love the fluidity of femininity and everything it entails. I even chose to write about this topic for this week's editorial because I'm consuming media created by women and it's helping me appreciate the women in my life even more. I am also thanking greater forces for pulling me out of the "pick-me" rings of Hell.

– Fatima Jahan Ena, Sub-editor, SHOUT



## PLAYWATCH

### GAMES



## Plants vs. Zombies 2: It's about time we talk about it

SAIF SAMMI RAHAT

*Plants vs. Zombies 2: It's About Time* is the long-awaited sequel to PopCap's *Plants Vs. Zombies*. Though many players online might disagree, *Plants Vs. Zombies 2* outshines its prequel in many aspects. Introducing a multitude of new game mechanics, more levels and plants, bosses as well as a PvP arena.

*Plants vs. Zombies 2*, in comparison to its predecessor, is faster-paced. Other than having more levels, another aspect of the game that is an improvement from its predecessor is the lower number of plants obtained per world. *Plants vs. Zombies* gave the player a new plant after almost every level, making the process feel redundant. In contrast, *Plants vs. Zombies 2* makes the process feel rewarding.

As much of an improvement *Plants vs. Zombies 2* may be, it has its shortcomings. The biggest "fault" of the game is microtransactions. *Plants vs. Zombies 2*, being a free mobile game, needed a source of income to continue further development. So, they turned to microtransactions with the game putting a bunch of recurring plants behind a pay-wall which upset many players, making it seem like a "pay-to-win" game.

To elaborate further, take plant boosts as an example. The Zen Garden gives temporary boosts to plants and can also be boosted by spending gems. Now, boosts may not be a bad idea but they can get out of hand. By making the harder levels easier to beat, they have essentially gotten rid of the need to strategise.

However, the main reason for the decline in the game's popularity is the addition of the plant levelling system. It uses seed packets to level up plants,

ultimately making the game unbalanced with the weakest plants easily defeating the strong zombies. Players wishing to level up their plants can purchase a bunch of seed packets only to speed through hard levels without getting any real satisfaction after completing them. This feature also feeds into the pay-to-win aspect of the game.

In recent times, the community has developed mods – which can only be played on Android devices and emulators – for the game which aim to rectify the flaws of the game. The most popular mods are ECLISE, Reflourished, and Alternate Universe (Altverz).

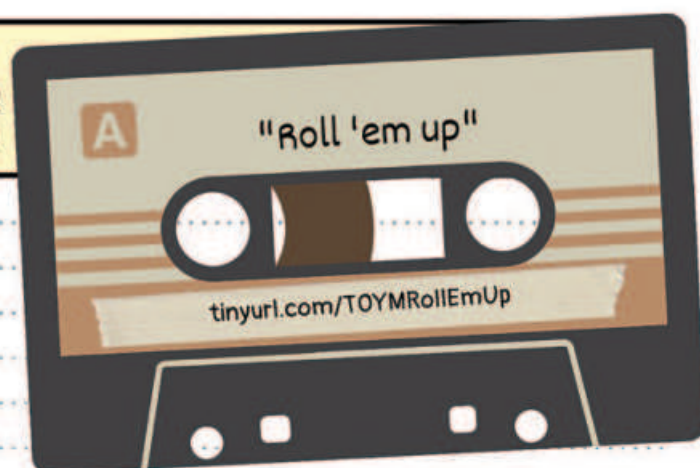
Reflourished is a DLC-esque mod which enhances the vanilla experience. It gets rid of plant levelling while nerfing overpowered plants to introduce variety in strategy. Alongside that, Reflourished also expands each of the worlds while adding two whole new worlds.

For players looking for slower-paced gameplay, Altverz is the mod for them. Altverz completely alters the game, introducing all new levels, reworking plants, getting rid of plant levelling, and also reintroducing the 25 sun meta.

*Plants vs. Zombies 2* even with all its balancing issues, is still a decent game. If these issues had not caused its downturn, it only would have been a matter of time before the game was left to sit and rust. These mods are keeping the community engaged, with Reflourished and Altverz having a crossover event this month, and are perfect for players looking to come back to playing the game.

Saif Sammi Rahat is currently listening to 'Chemtrails Over The Country Club' and refuses to listen to any other song. Do NOT recommend songs at [facebook.com/saif.s.rahat](https://facebook.com/saif.s.rahat)

### TITLE OF YOUR MIXTAPE



A	B
To The Blade Everything Everything	Pursuit Of Happiness Kid Cudi ft. MGMT
Yellow cab DPR LIVE	Time Machine Ingrid Michaelson
Northern Wind City And Colour	Beatles Firoze Jong
Moonlight Kali Uchis	Rollin' (Air Raid Vehicle) Limp Bizkit

Email us at [shoutds@gmail.com](mailto:shoutds@gmail.com)  
with feedback, comments, and reader  
submissions within 500 words.



# A guide to buying *panjabis* this festive season

**BIPRA PRASUN DAS**

For many, wearing a *panjabi* during occasions like Eid and Pahela Baishakh is a must. However, buying the perfect *panjabi* can be daunting, especially when clothing stores are inundated with options in the lead-up to Eid and Boishakh.

Come to think of it, an ideal *panjabi* needs to tick three boxes: it should fit well, the material should be comfortable enough, and it should come in colours and designs you like.

Your options depend on your budget, whether you can easily find *panjabis* in sizes that fit you, and your tastes and preferences. While many people may prefer to purchase *panjabis* from the country's top clothing brands, others may choose to shop elsewhere, looking for more unique and cheaper alternatives. Some even prefer getting their *panjabis* tailored and customised.

During the festive seasons, the leading clothing stores of the country stock up on their collection of *panjabis*. One advantage of buying *panjabis* from these clothing brands is that they are readily available in showrooms and shopping complexes. Given how these *panjabis* are designed by the esteemed fashion designers of the country, they are usually aesthetically pleasing, with eye-catching patterns and embroidery. These clothing brands have a significant online presence, too, which adds the convenience of online shopping.

On the downside, this option can prove to be quite expensive. Moreover, you may find yourself twinning with an acquaintance or random strangers

on the street since many of these *panjabis* are mass manufactured, and the nice ones sell out quite fast. Brand stores stock up on what's trending and often have generic designs. If you are someone who likes to swim against the tide and be a touch unique, this might not be the ideal choice for you.

Buying *panjabis* from retailers not affiliated with brands can often be rewarding. Characterised by somewhat unique designs and lower prices, these *panjabis* may help you stand out. For this, you can visit Elephant Road, Badruddoza Super Market, Nur Jahan Super Market, and Sharif Market in old town, to name a few. However, remember that you may need to pay close attention to the quality of the fabric you are buying, and oftentimes haggling with the salespeople is the only way to get a fair price.

Customised, tailored *panjabis* are also an option you can consider. If you want *panjabis* that fit you perfectly, with unique designs, this might be the best option for you. In addition, you get to determine what designs and embroidery you want. You have a degree of control over the quality of the fabric, too. Allah Karim Jame Moshjid Super Market near Mohammadpur bus stand and Mohammadia Market located in Mirpur-11 are good places to get a customised *panjabi*. Then again, this might end up being expensive, and you may need to order the *panjabis* a few weeks in advance, especially during the festive seasons. There may also be discrepancies in how you imagined the *panjabi* would turn out versus how it turns out on delivery.

While buying *panjabis*, it may also help to consider how frequently you plan to wear it after the festive season is over. In that case, longevity, fabric quality, and comfort are more essential than other factors.

*Bipra Prasun Das is highly dependent on his mom for shopping. Send him condolences at bipraprasun22@gmail.com*



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA



ILLUSTRATION: FATIMA JAHAN ENA

## Why you should make small changes to your room

**RUDAIBA MAHBUB**

*It's early morning and you are ready to leave the room you have been in for the last 15 hours. You take one last glance to check if everything is in place. It's all neat and clean. Yes, you unplugged the straightener as well, you're good to go. And you know everything is going to be the same when you return in the evening.*

While this is the pure essence of home which brings us comfort, we often find ourselves stuck in these places along with our routines. The same chairs and tables in classrooms, or the same cubicles at work. And, at the end of the day, the same room with the same framework. As much as the monotony of our routines frustrate us, so do these places we regularly find ourselves in, especially our rooms. Even if we are well-adjusted with our rooms, a few changes here and there can help to break the monotony.

The changes don't have to be big, or even cost much time, energy, or money. Even small changes can make a big impact. Simply rearranging the existing furniture in a room, maybe moving the desk or bed beside the window, making sure not to block the natural light or fresh air, can be a good starting point.

Adding new things like small chairs, rugs, plants, posters, etc. can add a lot of personality to a room. Fairy lights and lamps can also help to change the room's overall mood, making it cosier. Altering the colour palette of the room can also help, which doesn't necessarily involve changing wall colours. Hanging up posters or paintings can easily bring vibrancy to the colour palette.

Apart from adding or rearranging things, getting rid of unused items can make a big difference as well. This makes the room feel less cluttered and provides more open space.

Why am I going on a rant about changing things in your room, you might ask? Like I said, making these small changes has a big impact, especially for our mental health. Finding ourselves, day after day, in an unchanging space can negatively impact us, even though we might not be aware of it. Personally, making changes in my room has, a lot of times, helped me escape this monotony. It also helps us take agency of our life when we might feel stuck or helpless in other areas.

Moreover, these changes can also help boost our creativity and productivity. For example, a new chair might demand your attention and you might find yourself sitting on it and getting a small task done that you were otherwise neglecting. Or that plant you put in one corner might give you the motivation to wake up at a specific time just so you can water it.

These are only some of the small yet impactful things we can do for ourselves. So, take charge of your room, experiment with the furniture and decorations, be playful with things. By doing so, take control of your immediate surroundings and see the wonders it does.

*Rudaiba believes she can conquer Mordor, if only she could gather the energy to get out of bed. Remind her to stop daydreaming at rudaiba.rhymee@gmail.com*



MASHIYAT NAYEEM AND  
TAZREEN JAHAN BARI

*The evolution of the saree has been nothing short of fascinating – it has adapted to changing times while retaining its timeless appeal. From the ancient Indus Valley Civilisation to the Mughal era, the six yards long cloth has been an integral part of South Asia's culture and heritage. It has witnessed the rise and fall of empires, the birth of new traditions, and the emergence of modernity. And yet, it has remained as beautiful and captivating as ever.*



The garment's origins can be traced back to the north-western parts of the subcontinent in 2800–1800 BC when cotton weaving became well-established in the flourishing Indus Valley Civilisation. Sculptures from the first century AD depict the drape we know and love in its earliest forms.

The saree has stood the test of time and remained the traditional wear of the region because of the prevailing modest dress customs of the area. However, the arrival of Muslim rulers and their culture introduced the veil that often accompanies the saree. In ancient Hindu belief, stitched clothes were considered impure, therefore the saree was draped without any stitched pieces. It was during the rule of the British that the petticoat and the blouse were introduced. Old Hindu texts also reveal that it was believed a woman's navel and midriff should be uncovered as they were considered the source of life, a notion that influenced the draping style we commonly wear today.

There are over a hundred ways to drape sarees, and modern women have found many different ways to put a twist to them, from pant saree to a more gown-like approach. Through continual movement, stillness, and play with the body, it can be worn according to personal needs, whether working in the fields or dancing the night away. But the versatility of the saree is nothing new. Historical records tell us that heroines like Queen Jhansi had worn a saree even while fiercely battling on horseback!

Until the late 1800s, most women wore the garment without a top. After the garment had been deemed too immodest for social gatherings, Jnanadanandini Devi adapted and popularised the idea of wearing the saree with a blouse after her new exposure to the Parsee way of donning the garment. Soon enough, the blouse became a quintessential part of wearing the saree. Looking back at our grandparents' generation, we can see how the blouse took the icing on the cake, with sleeveless styles that accentuated the collarbone and patterned cardigan-style top that exemplified elegance.

Today, the blouse is a fashion statement of its own. Backless, puffed sleeves, halter-neck, sequined – the combinations are endless. Recently, crop tops and shirts as a substitute for blouses have become increasingly popular among the youth.

"Personally, I think using crop tops is a game changer. It saves you multiple trips to the tailor as you can readily find different sizes and styles online," said Farzin Ahmed, a second-year student at a public university. Sarees often do not come with separate fabric for the blouse, so it can become incredibly time consuming and expensive to find the right fabric, design it appropriately, and give it to the tailor

for stitching. For students, this can also burn a hole in their pockets. This is where alternatives like crop tops, shirts, and embroidered jackets come into play. Another reason for their popularity is the absence of the scrutiny that often accompanies the making of an unconventional blouse.

Getting creative with the blouse, or wearing sneakers with a saree to create a fusion look, have become popular choices.

To keep up with the current fashion trends, online saree shops have also developed unique designs and unconventional patterns like animal motifs, pop culture references, and graphic texts spread out through the 6 yards.

Variations in the bottom of the drape have also become increasingly common, from billowy ruffles and flared skirts, to mermaid-like silhouettes. Many boutiques also stock the pant saree, a style that is quickly becoming popular for its ease of draping. While some people love the acclimatisation of the saree with the modern woman's needs and taste, others have deemed it an attack on our culture.

Jarah Mahzabeen Fatima, a 24-year-old fresh graduate, expresses, "Adding a new element to the traditional attire is not necessarily about making a political statement. Most people who wear their saree differently or choose more modern designs do so because of their aesthetic preferences or for their own comfort. It's not a good or bad thing, it just depends on the person and their taste."

Today, we have no restrictions on the material and colour of the saree we wear. But it wasn't always the case in the past, as a woman's choice of saree was governed by her social class. Women from higher socioeconomic classes had the luxury of experimenting with various saree drapes and fabric types, ranging from pricey silks to high-quality cotton whereas lower socioeconomic classes usually wore coarse cotton sarees.

The history of the six yard drapery gets darker when we realise that it was used as a tool to control the lives of women and limit them from reaching their potential. It was customary for widows of Bengal to drape themselves in a white saree for the rest of their lives when their husbands passed away, thus preventing them from remarrying or living a dignified life, a practice that is deeply rooted in misogyny.

The sombre white is now the epitome of grace. It has made its way into bridal wear, party wear and even the regular outfits of the summer season. Although Bengali brides are often expected to drape a red Banarasi saree with *zari* work, modern brides are steering away from red and making room for pastels with a softer finish.

In fact, the very notion that silks are for bridal wear is being challenged by brides who are going for the *Jamdani* weave instead. With

pastels and lighter shades becoming more popular, the distinctions that used to be made based on the saree colour have become obsolete for the most part.

However, colours continue to be a big part of our cultural celebrations, from the bright sunny yellow of marigold blooms in *Falgun* festivities to the fiery red and crisp white saree of *Pohela Boishakh*. The origin of the famous red and white saree is unclear, but it is generally accepted that the red is reminiscent of the vitality of a new season and the flamboyant *krishnochuras* of the summer.

While a wide range of materials are now available, the attraction of traditional handwoven saree remains intact for the most part. *Jamdani* and other handloom cotton sarees, such as the famous *Tangail tant*, are loved by young women who like to incorporate saree into everyday life.

The famous Dhaka Muslin of the Mughal Era is a lost art, and today's industrially woven muslin does not bear resemblance to the translucent airy fabric. Yet, muslin sarees have seen a resurgence in recent times as more and more young people feel the need to connect with their culture. Furthermore, while coarse cotton sarees were only worn by lower-class people in the past, handloom cotton is not only worn but loved by women of all classes and social statuses now.

As with all things, capitalism has taken advantage of this and replaced handloom sarees with the mass-produced machine-made sarees that currently sweep the market. Sarees meant to last a long time are now bought mindlessly and tossed after the program or occasion it was purchased for. Even still, we have globalisation to thank for the renewed sense of pride and comfort in wearing the beloved garment. Often previously viewed as a reminder of patriarchy and women's lack of connection to the outside world, young people are now reclaiming the saree as their own.

The 21st-century rendition of the saree has left behind some social norms and become more inclusive and varied in its use with its innovative and practical designs. Yet, the long history and nostalgia attached to it make it unique to the modern woman. Despite the shift in culture that allows women to wear pants and fits deemed 'masculine' by society, we often find ourselves gravitating towards the ever feminine saree. The saree is not just a garment, but it is the symbol of our history, of growing up, of a bride's new adventure, and the true essence of a Bengali woman.

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*Tazreen likes to believe she carries her saree well. Her pleats, however, tell a completely different story. Share your saree story with her at tazreenzahan@gmail.com*

*Mashiyat once put so many safety pins in her saree that legend has it, she still hasn't recovered all of them. Teach her how to wear it properly at mashiyat.nayem@gmail.com*



PHOTOS: ORCHID CHAKMA





**Areeq Imran**



**Joyita Roy**



**Shourav Islam**



**Sumaya Rumman**

# Scholarship opportunities are making studying abroad attainable for students

The quality of education, career opportunities and lifestyle of foreign countries has always attracted Bangladeshi students to pursue higher studies abroad. Every year, many students in our country fulfil their dream of going abroad for higher education and building a career.

Currently, Australia is one of the most popular and desired study destinations among Bangladeshi students because of its huge scholarship opportunities from the government, the high ranking of universities, and the wide range of courses they offer.

Many students get worried about the expense of studying in Australia, but scholarships can work as blessings for Bangladeshi students.

Currently, PFEC Global, an education consultancy agency, has a 92 percent scholarship success rate and a 96 percent visa grant success rate. In the past years, we have witnessed many students achieving scholarships up to 100 percent at the top-ranked universities of Australia from PFEC Global.

Today, we are going to share some of the stories of our achievers who got scholarships at some of the top-ranked universities in Australia.

**Abu Sayeed Md Nasif, Master of Engineering, Deakin University, Australia**  
I started dreaming of studying abroad during my university life. But I didn't have any idea regarding the procedure. With the help of PFEC Global, I got the opportunity to enrol for a Master's in Electrical and Renewable Energy Engineering with a 100 percent scholarship at Deakin University. It is very difficult to sort out the proper scholarship opportunities by oneself. However, PFEC Global has helped me a lot in this regard.

**Shourav Islam, Bachelor of Information Technology, Australian Catholic University**  
Watching my cousins studying abroad

encouraged me to pursue my higher education abroad. But I had no idea about how to approach it. Finally, I got to know about PFEC Global from one of its expos held in Gulshan. After that, I visited their office in person to start my processing. After completing all the processes within just a few days, I got my student visa with a 50 percent scholarship for a Bachelor of IT at Australian Catholic University.

**Sakibul Islam, Master of Business Ana-**



**Sakibul Islam**

**lytics, La Trobe University**

I always thought of doing my master's in a foreign country. So, I went to PFEC, which I found reliable. I was really impressed with their counselling and knowledge regarding Australian student visas. So, finally, I got enrolled at La Trobe University with a 50 percent scholarship.

People think that it's a complex process to study abroad, but with the help of PFEC Global, I found it to be a sequential and smooth process.

**Sumaya Rumman, Bachelor of Agricultural Science, University of Adelaide**  
I applied for a Bachelor of Agricultural Science at one of the Group of Eight

(Go8) universities – the University of Adelaide – through PFEC Global and got a 50 percent scholarship. As a bachelor's student, a scholarship is very important because it's a long study duration. So, a 50 percent scholarship was very much needed for me and I am grateful to the PFEC team who handled my student file with such care.

With a good academic background and the right guidance, it is absolutely

courses related to your subject.

**Areeq Imran, Bachelor of Science in Computer Science, University of New South Wales**

After completing my HSC, my parents wanted me to pursue my bachelor's degree abroad. I was really confused about the study destination, university, and subject. As my priority was Australia, I searched for agencies that work with top-ranked universities in Australia and came across PFEC Global.

Finally, I got admitted to a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science at the University of New South Wales, one of the Go8 universities, with a 15 percent scholarship.

Studying abroad is a crucial decision for any student. It can change your life and career. So, to get a fruitful result, students can rely on PFEC Global for their journey abroad.

PFEC Global's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Registered Migration Agent of Australia (MARA: 1795751), Md. Shahidul Islam has been working efficiently since its foundation to make the study abroad process easy and effective for students.

"It's been over 16 years that PFEC Global has been working in the international education industry with top-ranked universities of the world and serving the students to bring them the best possible outcome," says Md. Shahidul. "Our dedicated and experienced expert counsellors have always been very professional and hard working to fulfil the dream of studying abroad of our students. They are very cordial and informative with every student."

Australia, as a study destination, has always been the core of PFEC Global with a tremendous success rate and reputation. PFEC Global believes that their top-notch services and experienced team's hard work have led to today's success. With proper guidance, fulfilling students' dreams of studying abroad is the goal of PFEC Global.

possible to study in Australia with a scholarship.

**Joyita Roy, Diploma of Business leading to Bachelor of Business, Macquarie University**

The immense support of PFEC Global finally paid off when I got enrolled at Macquarie University for a diploma in Business, later leading to a Bachelor of Business with a scholarship of AUD 3000 for the diploma and AUD 10,000 (per year) for the bachelor's degree.

PFEC Global guided me really well with my decision to pursue a diploma followed by a bachelor's. No matter which academic background you belong to, Australia offers



# Night on the borderline

SHAIKH SABIK KAMAL

Hazy eyes, dim-lit skies, an abyss susurrating with lullabies,  
I walked over the borders on this sleepless night,  
Misplaced stacks, cross-lit tracks, a glass house seemingly void of cracks,  
My mind took one step forward, only to go three steps back.  
So, I kept walking, carefully,  
For loneliness begets solace.  
An unwarranted guide, tormented pride, a sheep inside of a wolf's hide,  
I grew tireless as my ambitions fell short of the winner's tide,  
Nurtured sins, lucid dreams, a mistake moulded at the seams,  
The bleak, blurry lights flickered like a flame in the wind.  
So, I kept walking, miserably,  
For love couldn't retrace.  
For hope couldn't find me when I travelled across time,  
For ropes couldn't bind me when I wandered into this crime,  
I was a vagabond of the night, walking the borderline  
Till the borders were broken and so was I.

Shaikh Sabik Kamal is learning to adopt poetry as an escapism from the daunting reality. He's eager to take a look into your mind at [sabik2005kamal4787@gmail.com](mailto:sabik2005kamal4787@gmail.com)



ILLUSTRATION: ABIR HOSSAIN



ILLUSTRATION: FATIMA JAHAN ENA

# The Bee and the Crow

RAIAN ABEDIN

*Whenever there's a sharp turn in the day's weather, it is usually the bees that are aware of it before anyone else. The crows are a close second with their extremely sharp vision that allows them to see glimpses of the future, but they cannot compete with the sensitivity of the wings of the bees.*

At the edge of the city, there's a small meadow that remains yellow for most of the year. At its heart, a giant tree stands with its face towards the heavens and its branches reaching to its sides, spreading shade and darkness. It was the only shelter to be seen across the horizon.

And so, when the sky grew heavy and the heavens crashed onto the earth, both a crow and a bee found themselves next to each other, under the tree, soaked in the ice-cold water of the rains.

"At this rate, I would not be surprised if fishes started swimming in the sky," said the crow, shivering the cold out of its system.

"The storm has already caused enough damage, crow, let's not come up with nightmarish delusions." The bee perched itself on the same branch as the crow, sitting comfortably to allow its weary wings to rest.

"Oh, I didn't notice you there. From where did you come?"

"From near the city. My hive was harmed by the humans and their poisonous gases. All of us now grow with weak wings. So now with the storm, I have lost all of my friends. Say, have you seen any bees scurrying about?"

"See? I don't do much of that nowadays," the crow shook its head and looked directly at the bee, "One of the elders of that city threw a pebble at me once, and my eyes have not seen the same since."

The bee, too, looked over to study the crow and its eyes – one was misty blue, and the other retained its regular dark complexion that reminded the bee of the

sunless and starless skies. The bee spread its wings and buzzed lightly to the top of the crow's head, then sat down.

"I hear storms are a very good time to make wishes," the weak bee told the half-blind crow, "If you make a wish the instant God bangs against the walls of the skies, it will come true."

"I have no wishes to make." The crow tilted its head and looked upwards, it imagined silhouettes of fish filling its vision, scuttering about in the heavy rain. It imagined the clouds as houses for the fishes that were the real masters of the sky. No Gods, just fishes that hopped from cloud to cloud, waiting for all birds to join them. One day, the crow would fly with them, and then it wouldn't matter if it could see.

"You don't want your eye back?" The bee asked, perplexed.

"What would be the point of asking Him for help?"

"I don't know. I would wish for Him to bring my friends to me."

The crow spread its wings, "We are not weak things, we don't need wishes. Hide yourself in my feathers, and I'm sure we can look for them together... if you help me see with your eyes of course."

In the rain, the clouds almost began to take the shape of various fishes. The two flew off, not waiting for the sky to turn bright or for God's hammer to fall upon the heavens. Those were never needed.

Raian writes stories.





# Traversing the ethical minefield of keeping pets

PHOTOS: **ORCHID CHAKMA**

## LAMIA KARIM

First things first, ethical pet keeping is attainable, with a bit of effort. This article attempts to resolve some of the moral dilemmas one might face before introducing a pet into their life.

What does ethical pet keeping in Bangladesh even mean? The answer to this question is nuanced. The rapidly developing cities in Bangladesh house animals that share unique dynamics with the different socioeconomic classes of our society. While the upper class may be busy choosing different breeds of dogs and cats, people from the lower and middle classes might be struggling to cater to the basic needs of their pets. Hence, the ethical questions vary vastly between individuals, depending on who they are and where they are from.

Persian cats, Pomeranians, Golden Retrievers, Ranchu goldfishes, and Parakeets that talk your loneliness away and impress your friends – there is, evidently, a world of unique breeds of pets if one can afford them. Even if one cannot, the biases around us form unspoken beliefs such as Persian cats being somehow better than Bengal cats. Many people refrain from adopting local cats in the hopes of being able to afford a superior breed in the unforeseeable future. Indeed, this is a very pressing issue and raises vital questions.

Is it a matter of preference or prejudice? Whichever it is for you, the choice must

be made with sufficient insight into what that means for the lives of these animals in mind. Persian cats have to be bred to meet the high demand. Buying them may be unethical considering how the breeders treat them prior to selling. Higher demand for them might translate to more abuse of these cats as more people enter the breeding business without proper training and knowledge.

Purchasing dog breeds are trickier since keeping dogs as pets have only recently risen in popularity, due to a previously persistent taboo in the country. Just like unique fish breeds, they remain expensive, and exclusive to aficionados, who sometimes visit neighbouring countries to get them. This might make it particularly difficult to crosscheck the foreign breeder's moral standards.

Even larger moral questions are raised as many animals have been purposely bred purely for aesthetic purposes, disregarding their health and comfort. This is where we need to weigh aesthetics against the animal's right to a comfortable life, the moral answer to which should be exceedingly easy to find. Admittedly, individual breeds do have other desirable traits sought out by different owners which are less egregious than just being nice to look at. This may include behavioural tendencies, such as a calm nature. You must, in that case, look at your preferences more introspectively – should you even have preferences when it

comes to wanting to take care of an animal that is alive and breathing? Because on the flip side, there is a surplus of stray animals in our cities that are in a dire need of the care that selective breeds receive. Resources spent on the latter can arguably be better spent on vaccinating and saving the life of an adopted pet.

Keeping birds, however, is quite different from keeping any of the other types of pets.



Their natural habitats cannot be mimicked inside bars and justifying keeping them can be a challenging feat.

Fishes are tricky as well. Fish sold commercially are, most likely, bred in captivity. Therefore, they should be bought as pets instead of being released to their natural habitat which they are unfamiliar with. The moral dilemma becomes pressing when

you consider the fact that if the demand for having fish as pets don't go down, the practice of breeding exotic fish in captivity won't go away either.

Be that as it may, as caretakers, proper knowledge about the species and their natural environment is crucial. An owner must strive to maintain a comfortable and proper atmosphere for their fish. The most common mistake with goldfish, for example, can be keeping them in fish bowls. They require bigger tanks since they produce toxic ammonia which causes them stress.

This is along the lines of the next crucial pillar of ethical pet keeping which is taking proper physical and psychological care of your pets. Studying about them and attempting to accommodate them comes with the responsibility of having them in the house. If one is not allowed to keep pets because of unwilling parents or if they are not in the situation to take care of an animal financially or due to hectic schedules, it is probably the right decision to not get pets. Having a pet might bring you happiness, but being able to look past that and putting the animal's needs at the forefront is a must.

Animals are not, in fact, possessions. It's a shame that not enough people realise that and make questionable ethical choices with their pets.

*Meow. Meow mew meow at  
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